

PUNCH

CHARIVARIA

DR. NKRUMAH is said not to have been perturbed by the recent scenes in Accra, where he was greeted with stones, hooting and a mob rendering of the war-song of the Ga tribe when he came to open Parliament. On the other hand they may well have given Dr. Jagan something to think about.

Pity My Simplicity

EVEN a child of three years, said a magistrate in a letter to *The Times* last week, is capable of expressing a sincere yes or no to the question "Who would you like to live with?" The trouble is that sincerity of this kind doesn't do much to help the court arrive at its decision.

Wider Still and Wider

THE British, explained Mr. Duncan Sandys in the course of a press conference in Australia, "do not try to duplicate what the Americans are doing—we try to get on with the next stage."



For example, although the Americans were first in the field with the Dulles, we made a spectacular leap ahead when we produced the Selwyn Lloyd.

Yes/No/Pyrexia Unknown Origin

As the Welfare State progresses, so our national tendency to hypochondria flourishes. Speaking to the press about an influenza epidemic among the men of Sheffield Wednesday, the club's manager said "This morning half the players were feeling unwell, and the other half didn't know how they felt."

Obviously they couldn't come straight out and say they felt all right; they might have been missing something good, like free paregoric.

Face in the Corner

A REQUEST by Epping Division Liberal Association for an exposure, by Mr. Graeme Finlay, M.P., of any Government action "violating the traditional privacy of the Englishman's home" is assumed to represent a



belated effort to stop the phone-tapping scandal. Some think, however, that it is an oblique attack on party political broadcasts.

Any Russian Steamrollers?

CONFIRMED collectors are often at a loss to know what to collect next, and there is encouraging news in reports that the de Havilland biplane in which Mr. Chamberlain flew to meet Hitler at Munich is now being offered for sale. Another curio expected to come on the market shortly is the bus that Hitler missed.

Glorious Near-Victory

FREEDOM lovers everywhere will have been inspired by the battle of Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks. Noticing that county council workmen were marking a hundred "dangerous" trees for felling, residents swung into action, and as a result of a petition to the parish council a save-our-trees plea by the whole village, and meetings between local residents and the county council, an official assurance was given that the

project would be dropped. The *Evening Standard* report (under "Women Vigilantes Save Trees for Village") spoiled things just a bit by ending: "Eventually the trees will have to be felled for road widening."

Look at that Humidity!

ANY idea that the city-dweller is now irrevocably out of touch with nature is firmly dispelled for readers of the architectural number of *Stainless Steel Review*. This explains, with illustrations, that a new eight-storey building, sheathed from head to foot in interlocking stainless steel panels and therefore windowless, has special indicators installed to tell occupants what sort of a day it is.

Try China

MR. ERNEST MARPLES is said to be watching with interest the development in America of postal deliveries by rocket. In the latest experiment a rocket took off from Florida with a letter for Washington and flew twelve hundred miles out to sea and dropped it, when it was picked up and flown to



its destination. When the innovation departs more startlingly from established G.P.O. practice Mr. Marples will ask for details.

Put Out More Flags

THE national weakness for courting publicity by emphasizing one's dislike of it—"backing into the limelight," as it was once called in the case of Sir James Barrie—is beginning to spread

into the most unexpected fields. For instance, here is an advertisement in the "Properties for Sale" column of the *Sunday Times*, headed in black type "A really fascinating property, VERY PRIVATELY IN THE MARKET."



More to Follow?

ENDLESS indignation was caused among B.B.C. staff when the Corporation decided that it should apologize for an item in a television programme which, it said, "should not have been broadcast." Among viewers the indignation was confined to the B.B.C.'s small-mindedness in confining their stricture to this one item.

Think-piece

AND talking about broadcasting, it was a bit disappointing to find that a newly-announced B.B.C. feature called *Does the Team Think?* is not to be a documentary programme about the Board of Governors but a new panel game to be played by four Light Programme favourites.

Fruits of Victory

BATTERED by the stream of German industrial success stories and booming German export sales, and disheartened by descriptions of their ex-enemy as the Midas of Europe, squatting possessively on bulging gold stocks, British readers felt their last drop of morale ooze away with the report that a sudden glut of

peaches in the shops was "only due to the Germans' not wanting them."

Ancient Pile Replenished

THE Duke of Devonshire no doubt thought he had settled his problems to the satisfaction of everyone concerned when he bequeathed his art treasures to the nation, and he must have felt that the nation was hard indeed to please when the complaints began to come in that Chatsworth without its art treasures was just another dreary old country house and not worth visiting. He should take a lesson from his brother duke, the Duke of Bedford, whose seat at Woburn, once a mere dump for Canaletto and Cuyp, has now already seen the crowning of a Milk Queen and a race for traction engines, and easily leads the field in the Stately Home Stakes.

Pest Control

A bill published in Moscow condemns "people leading an anti-social and parasitic kind of life."

THE well-known sequences of fleas

Go on *ad infinitum*,
But lesser fleas have little ease
When greater fleas indict 'em.

Disarmament Conference

THEN spake great Dulles, answering to the call,
"We're just not getting any place at all.
We've argued to and fro and, now we've done,
We're back at the same place where we begun."
"It's crystal clear to everybody from
Our observation of the Atom Bomb,"
Says Zorin, "it will blow us to perdition,
I therefore move its total abolition."
Then Harold Stassen said "The crab of course is
The Russians have got all the other forces.
So if we scrap the bomb then we have got
To find a way of scrapping all the lot."
Says Selwyn Lloyd "In that case try who can
Think up some wise and intermediate plan."
Zorin objects "I do not care a cuss,
Where they drop bombs, if it is not on us.
It's less than nothing to allay our fears
To say they shan't be dropped on polar bears.
I've done the best I can to square the bunch.
I even have asked Selwyn Lloyd to lunch."

While simpler souls all sing in symphony
The anthem of "Fall-Out and Follow-Me,"
The Americans prefer, as it is seen,
To keep the bomb but somehow keep it clean.
While everyone agrees it would be best
That nobody should have another test,
The trouble is that tests can't be detected,
So everyone has got to be inspected.
Though quite prepared on terms to make it known
They might agree to an Inspection Zone,
Russians for reasons, topical or tactical,
Think Full Inspection would be quite impractical.
The simplest plan, at length all come to see,
Is that they should agree to disagree
And then adjourn to see if prorogation
Can somehow clarify the situation.
(Who knows—next time with just an ounce of luck
The Americans might send round Mr. Gluck?)
They turn to the next point on the agenda,
And Mr. Khrushchev goes off on a bender.

C. H.

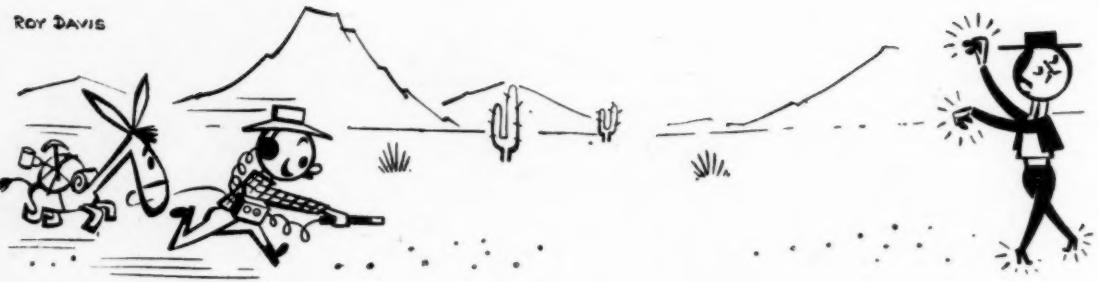
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[In the fable of the Frogs asking for a king, Jupiter first threw them down a log of wood, but they grumbled at so spiritless a king. He then sent them a stork, which devoured them eagerly.]



Bars Sinister

By H. F. ELLIS

A CONFERENCE has been arranged and will shortly take place . . .

The sun shines, the D-mark fluctuates and Sheffield Wednesday go down with Asiatic flu. But in the great Conference Hall at London Airport the blotting paper gleams white on the polished table, the ash-trays are out, the portraits of past Chairmen frown down upon the expectant scene. A secretary, grown grey in the service of B.E.A., flicks a speck of dust from the silver model of a Viscount on the mantelshelf. They say that Mr. Hacking himself is coming from the Treasury.

Cigars for the representatives of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, Egyptian cigarettes for the Board of Trade. H.M. Customs will smoke their pipes, the dirty things, and the B.E.A. men can please themselves—oh, and a cushion for the Home Office, in case they send that little man who always gets so tired towards the end. It is going to be a long one this time, and no mistake.

The subject for discussion is indeed one of some gravity. It is difficult, writing in advance of the event, to forecast exactly how it will be tackled, but one may safely assume that the Chairman will begin by stating the problem. He will tell them that H.M. Customs' regulation is that short-lift aircraft of B.E.A. may carry only twenty-five cigarettes and a quarter of a pint of spirits per passenger seat; that the Customs nevertheless allow each passenger to bring in duty free up to 200 cigarettes and half a bottle of spirits; that, in order to oblige returning travellers who may wish to take advantage of this concession, B.E.A.'s stewards are accustomed to buy in

extra stocks at foreign airports; that B.E.A.'s passengers sometimes fail to avail themselves of their privileges to the full, with the result that aircraft land at London Airport carrying more dutiable goods than they set off with. Whereupon, gentlemen, it is the practice of H.M. Customs to impound the bar, lock, stock and, in a sense, barrel. The matter has now reached an impasse. Many implications will no doubt have to be considered. But if everyone pulls his weight and shows a readiness to compromise it should be possible, in the Chairman's view, for the present conference to come to a decision to meet again early in the New Year and report progress. B.E.A.?

B.E.A. Much has already been done. Negotiations in this matter between ourselves and H.M. Customs have been proceeding—

H.M. CUSTOMS. Please drop the H.M. There is no need to be formal here.

B.E.A. Thank you—proceeding for the last five years. The correspondence is available for inspection if desired. However, some forty of our bars remain impounded and we are anxious to bring the matter to a conclusion. If, as has been suggested, we instruct our stewards to cease buying in extra stocks abroad, the majority of our passengers will at once transfer their custom to foreign airlines not shackled by regulations devised two hundred years ago to meet the needs of sailing ships.

HOME OFFICE: We are very much concerned in this matter, for reasons which I am not at liberty to reveal. Why don't you instruct your stewards to cease buying in extra stocks abroad? In my opinion—

CHAIRMAN: That question has just been answered. Treasury?

HOME OFFICE: They don't speak up nowadays. It's just the same in the theatre. I never go to the play. Nor does my wife. In the old days they used to train actors to *throw* the voice, it's a thing you've got to learn, just as we used to be taught as boys not to interrupt—

CHAIRMAN: Treasury?

MR. HACKING: There must be no loss to the Exchequer. Otherwise I am instructed to say that we shall be agreeable, subject to the usual provisos, to any arrangement that may be come to.

CHAIRMAN: Excellent. Thank you. If we all work together in that spirit, I look forward to a happy and fruitful conference. Yes?

A SMALL BALD MAN: I just wanted to say, on behalf of Town and Country Planning, that I think my invitation may perhaps have been intended for Transport and Civil Aviation. At the same time, as I am here—

BOARD OF TRADE: Wasn't your Ministry abolished some years ago?

CHAIRMAN: A good point, Trade. I think the question should be answered.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING: Yes, indeed. Yes. Strictly speaking that is so. Of course, there is always a certain amount of clearing up to be done—ah—disposal and so on.

MR. HACKING: Whisky and cigarettes? (laughter).

B.E.A.: The problem is a serious one. The strain on our stewards is becoming intolerable. They feel the impounding of their bars very deeply. Some of them have taken to pressing free drinks and cigarettes on home-coming passengers, and there have been cases of aircraft circling for upwards of two hours over the airport in an attempt to reduce the stocks of spirits to a level

at which it is safe to land. The Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires recently had to be carried from the plane. We can no longer accept responsibility for such incidents. He should be laid firmly at the door of H.M. Customs. In view of the clouds of smoke—

CHAIRMAN: Is the Ministry of Health here? There is the question of lung-cancer.

H.M. CUSTOMS: We can always abolish the duty-free concession and clear the whole thing up in a twinkling.

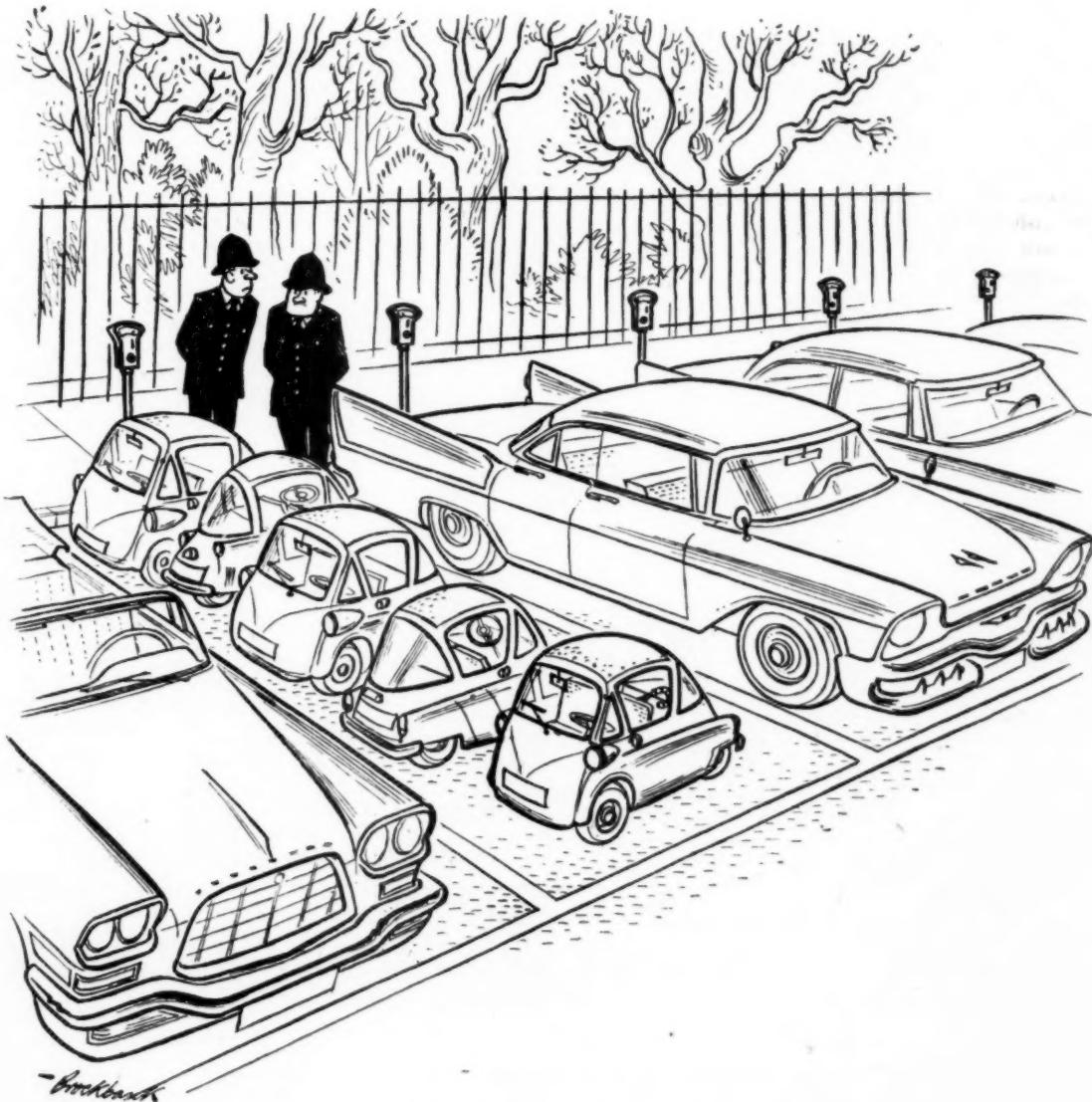
SEVERAL VOICES: Oh I say, look here, Jimmy . . . As one who, in the course of his duty . . . Speaking purely from the point of view of the British Travel Association . . . Can't hear a word. If people would only tilt the head back and *project* . . .

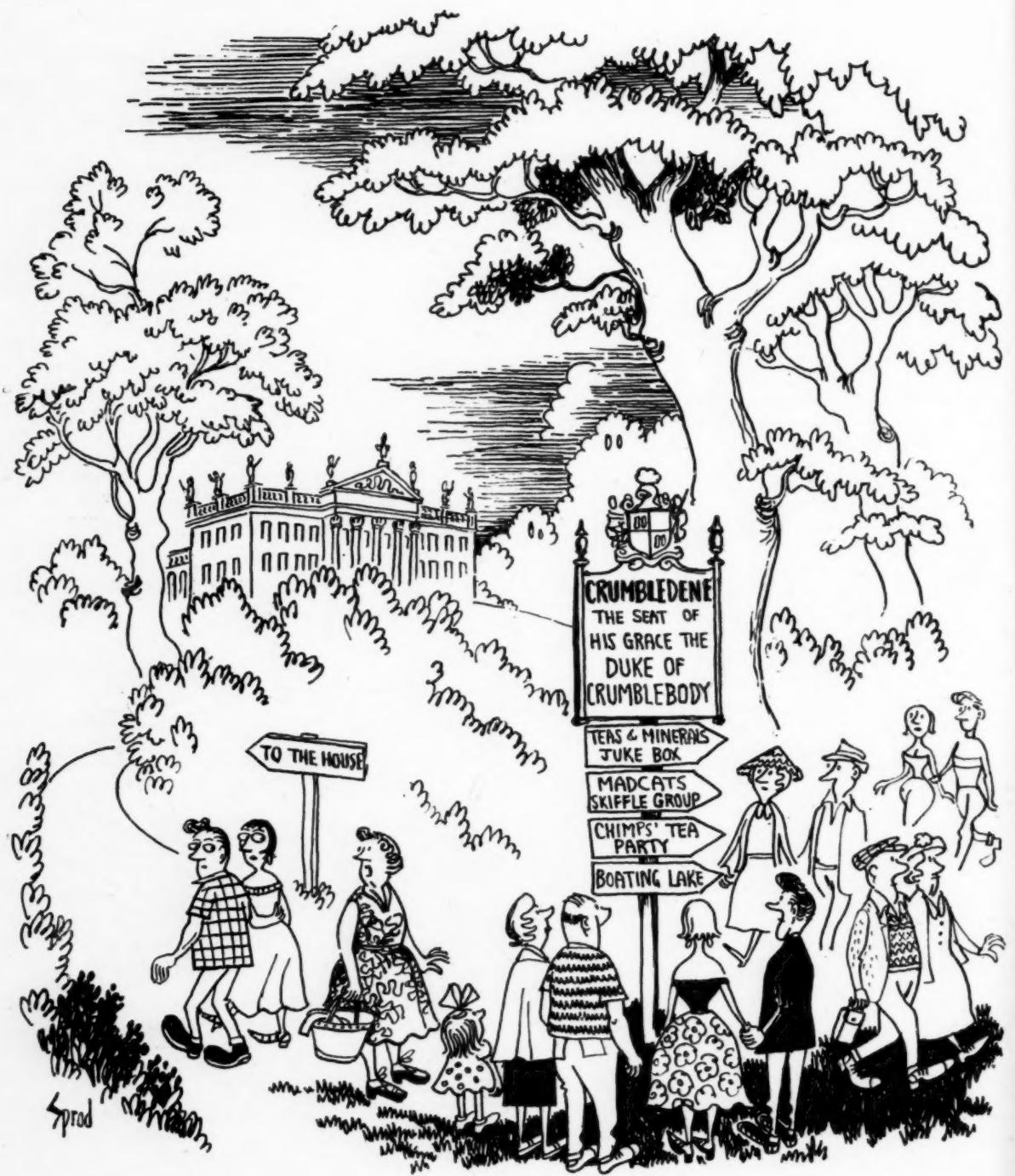
CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, gentlemen. It is clear that a great many interests are involved. I propose, with your approval, that we form ourselves into a Steering Committee to prepare an Agenda for discussion at a full-scale conference

attended by representatives of *all* interested bodies. Health and Education should certainly be here. Perhaps the Minister of Agriculture and Fish. The P.M.G. would no doubt wish to be present. We must beware of going off at half-cock. Scotland Yard may have views. The Admiralty, the Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Commission, Sir John Wolfenden—

MR. HACKING: The Elder Brethren of Trinity House?

CHAIRMAN: Certainly, if they fly.





"There's nothing up there—only a dreary old house full of antiques."

America Day by Day

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

IN the summer solstice it becomes harder and harder for those who write the theatrical news for the American papers to find any theatrical news to write about. After a few half-hearted attempts to interest the public in the production of *Charley's Aunt* at the Cliffside Theatre at Mountain Heights, New Hampshire, they generally give it up and confine themselves to telling us what will be coming on along Broadway next season. We thus learn that a musical comedy called *Goldilocks* is to be with us in October, the author of which is Mr. Walter Kerr, the dramatic critic of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, and we are all wondering how Mr. Kerr will handle the situation in his dramatic critical capacity. If I were he I would go out boldly and give it a darned good notice, modelling my attitude on that of John Rankin Bridges of Salisbury, Maryland, when had up the other day before Judge Murphy for vagrancy.

"Judge," said Mr. Bridges, when all the evidence was in and he had weighed it thoroughly, "I'd like to sentence myself."

"Go ahead," said Judge Murphy. "About how much would you suggest?"

"Six months?" queried Mr. Bridges.

"You take the words out of my mouth," said Judge Murphy. "I was just thinking at that very moment that six of the best would be the exact figure."

You can't stop the Do-It-Yourself movement. It is sweeping the country.

I am sure everybody will feel a pang—possibly two pangs—when they hear about George Stein of Shorewood, a suburb of Milwaukee. George is one of those motorists who have never quite succeeded in getting the hang of the thing. He knows there is a right way and a wrong way of obtaining road-performance from his car, but what has always bothered him is that he has never been able to figure out which is which. He uses his car, accordingly, only once a month, when he goes to see his doctor; and making his customary trip last week he passed four stop-and-go signs, four arterial stop signs, made three illegal left turns and on seven occasions drove on the wrong side of

the street. Fined fifty dollars in the District Court, he has also had his licence taken away, with the result that the inhabitants of Shorewood, who twelve times a year have been climbing trees and ducking down manholes, are now breathing freely again. The cry of "Take to the hills, men, here comes George," which once was enough to empty the streets of the suburb in what is known as a twinkling, is no longer heard.

I was speaking the other day of the difficulty I had, living three thousand miles away on the other side of the Atlantic, in gauging the British public's interest in seals. A similar problem confronts me when I take typewriter in hand with a view to writing about hens. I could gladly write about these birds all day and never tire, but I don't want to have people in England saying "Avoid that man. He bores everybody stiff

about hens." But I do think I am justified in mentioning briefly that there is a Leghorn in New Brunswick, N.J., which has just laid seventeen eggs in four days, for everyone knows that par is five or at the most six.

It is the assembling of the calcium for the shell that holds a hen back. This, it seems, cannot be done in under eighteen hours, and yet this New Brunswick hen came through with its stupendous feat, ignoring all the ruling of the form book. It is significant, I think, that this egg-laying orgy started immediately after the farmer, noticing that the Leghorn was feeling the heat a little—it was at a time when the thermometer had touched a hundred—put her in a bucket of water and then sprayed her with the hose. A hen has very little means of expressing herself in circumstances like these. Where you or I would have lit a cigarette and thrown off an epigram, there was



"He is too begging!"



nothing much this Leghorn could do as a retort except lay eggs.

So apparently the thing to remember, if you want four-a-day eggs, is to keep ducking the feathered friends in buckets. But what a life!

The latest news is that the straw hat, or boater, or sennet—or, for the matter of that, skimmer—is coming back into popularity after seeming to have passed into limbo in 1920. In the brave old days it was obligatory to start wearing a straw hat on May 15 and to finish wearing it on September 20, when you would throw it away, preferably during a baseball game in the hope that it would hit an umpire and make him wish that he had called his decisions in favour of the visiting team more carefully. A well-directed straw hat, with the regulation three-and-a-half-inch brim, could inflict as nasty a flesh wound as a pop bottle.

To-day, manufacturers say, the sale of skimmers is going up at the rate of ten to twenty per cent per annum. It may be so, but I think they made a mistake in publishing a photograph of Mr. M. R. Litman, chairman of the

Board of Men's Hats Inc., wearing one. I would not say anything in the least derogatory to Mr. Litman's appearance—my own is nothing to write home about—but I do feel strongly that I would rather be dead in a ditch than look like that.

Everybody wants Billy Graham's crusade to be a success in every way, so

it is pleasant to read a recent headline in *Variety*:

GRAHAM CRUSADE
UPBEATS DISKING
OF RELIGIOSONGS

Instead of sporadic religioso releases as in the past, says *Variety*, the diskery is now regularly scheduling from two to three of these platters every month.

Before the Storm

THE thinning beams of sunlight fade and wither;
The west is radiant, the rest is glum.
The frightened bird dives hedgeward in a dither,
Dreading the sudden shadow, stricken dumb.
The air is purple like a powdered plum,
Heavy and dense as suet roly-poly.
Some distant demon renders on his drum
A lifelike imitation of Stromboli;

Another has a Brobdingnagian zither,
And on its strings the thunder-fingers strum.
The first, fat, desultory raindrops come,
Dancing like dinosaurs, exceeding slowly.
The frightened bird hops hither, thither, hither,
Guarding his hedge like a demented goalie.

R. P. LISTER

Venom

VERY, very thought-provoking and forward-looking are the remarks (assuming he has been correctly quoted) of TV-Man Cyril Shaps, which, if you failed to read at the time, would be well worth while looking up and conning.

In case you missed any of the background situation, it was that here we had Shaps, described by a TV producer as a mild, quiet sort of man. This, naturally, would get Shaps nowhere—but, said TV-producer, “he can cultivate a manner and incisiveness of speech which positively drip venom.”

Next thing that happened was that Shaps found himself in a number of roles of the kind which causes the unsophisticated audience to hiss and throw. Robespierre was one of them, and although many people have written in to point out that Robespierre was a kindly old Frog at heart and much misunderstood, it is not that side of his nature which is apt to come over the screen.

Apparently as a result of all this, well-wishers, fans of Shaps, became anxious. They said he was making himself an object of public obloquy.

Shaps, a thinker, saw the situation more clearly than they did, and what he quite simply said was that the public “need somebody to hate” and went on to add that “the more they hate me, the more they’ll like me.”

In this lightning flash Shaps illuminates and explains almost everything that is mediocre and effete about goings-on in what may be termed, for want of a better term, the mid-twentieth century. Once grasp the public need for “somebody to hate,” and you, you mild-mannered little Parliamentary Under-Secretary for this or that, and you, sir, who think to win popularity and influence with your staff by “being decent,” and particularly you, my dear friend the vicar, who have never been known to spit so much as a spoonful of venom at even the vilest member of your congregation, may hope to make some sort of progress at last.

Just every so often a boxer has tried to show the way forward, outraging the convention and evoking public hatred, by saying, for publication, “Best man won? Don’t make me laugh. That

louse won because he was the first to get to the referee with the mostest bribe.” Such men are assured of a niche in the public heart.

It is, above all, the politicians who are missing the bus so clearly pointed out to them by Shaps as going the whole way.

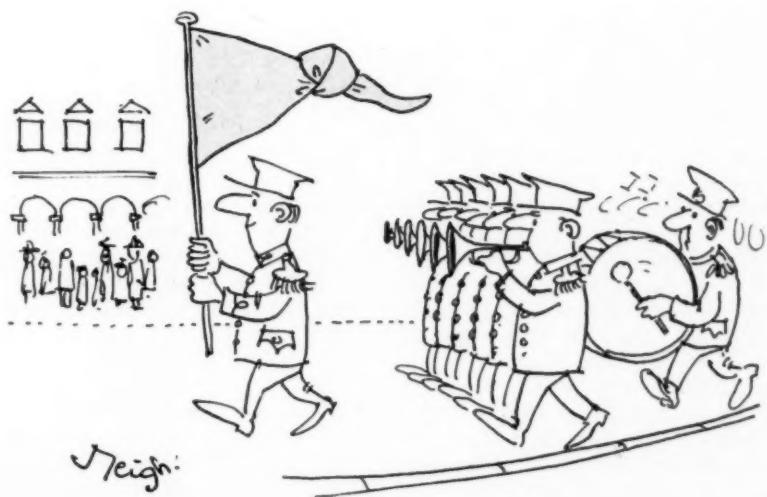
There are plenty of leading men, thank heaven, in all of our political parties, who are capable of beastliness—who may, indeed, be said to be naturally beastly. But a failure to appreciate Shapsism has produced the grotesque situation in which many of these people who, as their nearest and dearest,

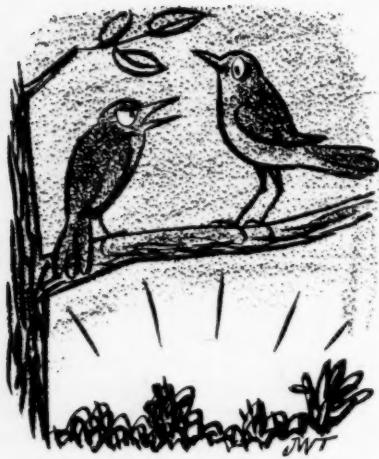
speaking from the domestic sanctum, could certainly testify, drip venom all up and down the paths of their private lives, try to swallow it when they come out in public.

Yet the opportunities for making oneself hateful to the public increase with every extension of the apparatus of publicity. Just at present a politician sees a strike in progress somewhere, with grim-faced men and worried women standing in grey streets talking about the future of the country, or he hears of old-age pensioners being evicted *en masse* from their dwellings, or they tell him that owing to atomic fall-out all



“And don’t forget the bread . . . !”





“Come back to roost, you fool! That isn't the dawn chorus—it's Son et Lumière.”

the fish have quit the North Sea, bringing ruin to Grimsby, and his instinct is to pull on a pair of jeans and be shown on TV “drinking a sympathetic cup of tea as he listens to the problems of the victims of this very, very difficult situation.”

He achieves, of course, nothing. Nobody loves him much, and only a few, with exotic tastes, hate him. Contrast his failure with the certain success of the man who, lolling in a chauffeur-driven limousine with a glass in his hand and a bottle of champagne visible on the seat beside him—with, if desired, a mink-swathed blonde lolling there too—drives slowly along those same streets, or past the weeping pensioners or the fishless fishermen, sneering and yawning.

That man is giving the public what it wants, and he will have his reward. Yet no sooner does such a one go to the headquarters of his Party and suggest

such a course of action than he finds everyone tugging at his coat-tails and telling him to drink up quick, in here, the back-room, and then we'll run you down on the back of the motor-bike.

“Well now, I'm sure viewers will be very interested to hear the views on these serious matters of these two very distinguished members of the Government and the Opposition. Now, Jack . . .”

James Noakes: My name's Noakes. Where d'you get this “Jack” stuff from? I don't choose to have you calling me “Jack” in front of a lot of dimwits I never met and never want to meet.

Interviewer: Oh well, yes, I quite see that. We all have our little susceptibilities, don't we? Now, Mr. Oakes . . .

Oakes: I'll say we have our susceptibilities, and one of mine is a basic

repugnance towards being forced to sit in the studio pretending to discuss serious politics with a man like Noakes there who knows nothing about the matter in the first place, and is certainly half drunk.

Noakes: I'd rather be a drunk than a wife-beater any day.

Oakes: Listen, if you think you can be beastlier than I can, you smarmy hound, always lick-spittling for votes and not caring what you do or say to get them . . .

Interviewer: Well, that was all most interesting, and I'm sure viewers will be looking forward to hearing the two protagonists on the same programme next week.

Just before the programme is faded out Noakes and Oakes are seen hitting one another below the belt as each strives to be the last to make an effective gesture of spitting venom at the public.

♂ ♂

Take your Epic

WE must be prepared to forgive
The fact that there is not a spate
Of epics published to-day,
Seeing how few of us live
In what one would designate
A genuine epical way:
At a rapid reckoning zero
Looks like the total tally,
Except for the odd Welsh hero
To his own valley.

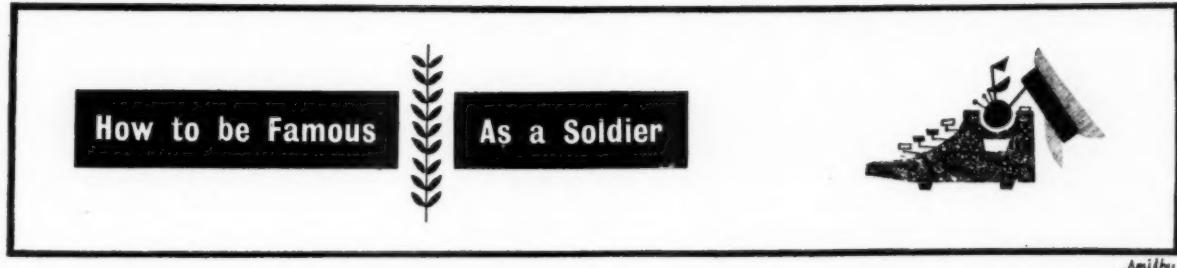
But if anything were to befall,
Or simply fall, and to scatter
All facts, files, reminiscing
And so on, in no time at all
Some decently epical matter
Could fill in whatever was missing:

Stories like that of the villain
Who slew by bowing a bomb
Through his beard Sir Hughie
Macmillan,
Nicknamed The Gom.

Of course the scholars will
swarm,
As swarms the esurient locust,
Pulling our heroes to pieces,
Getting them down to a norm,
Getting them “properly focused,”
Getting them into their theses.
But would any legend-buster,
However deep he delves,
Think up anything so lack-lustre
As the men themselves?

PETER DICKINSON





Smilby

How to be Famous

As a Soldier

"If you want to get on in the Army, keep away from troops."

Lt.-Gen. Sir Herbert Miles, G.C.B.,
G.C.M.G., G.B.E., C.V.O.

CHOICE OF REGIMENT

THE early stages of Army life need especially careful attention. For example, although you will never serve with your regiment if you can help it, it is important to be commissioned into a good one. Good regiments surviving at the time of writing comprise the following, more or less in order:

- The Foot Guards
- The Household Cavalry
- The other Cavalry
- The Grenadiers
- Light Infantry
- Fusiliers
- Royal Horse Artillery

REGIMENTAL SERVICE

As soon as possible after leaving Sandhurst you must contrive to become an A.D.C. A really busy A.D.C. with an acceptable social background can count on staying away from his regiment until he is almost due for promotion to captain. With no regimental experience he will naturally be of no use to his regiment then, and his C.O. is certain to give him a strong Staff College recommendation.

Some years later, the Military Secretary's branch at the War Office, whose assessment of an officer's capabilities must still to some extent be coloured by his position in the Army List, will tell you that you are due to command your regiment. Although you may already have been holding a lieutenant-colonel's appointment for some years in a comfortable station, do not miss this opportunity, unless your regiment is actually engaged in operations in a theatre of war.

COMMAND

To command a regiment at such occasions as presentations of new colours, searchlight tattoos, coronations,

etc., is a useful means of ensuring that the press publish your photograph, with your name below it, from time to time.

You should also, when you feel in a sufficiently strong position, issue a Part I Order of such a nature that it will provoke a question in the House from Mr. Wigg and an adverse paragraph in the *Daily Mirror*, only to be explained away in such a manner as to make both these authorities appear ignorant busybodies. Besides acquiring you a measure of favourable publicity this will ensure you the good opinion of the Secretary of State.

USEFUL ACTIVITIES FOR BRIGADIERS

At the end of your tenure of command you will have to bridge the difficult gap between lieutenant-colonel and major-general. Avoid the temptation to retire as a brigadier. Retired brigadiers can hope for little better than to be appointed Deputy Lieutenants of their county, an office whose duties are virtually confined to attending the funerals of Deputy Lieutenants of other counties.

There are still some forty generals' appointments in the War Office to be filled as required, however, and time as a brigadier can be usefully employed in working up connections with extra-Service activities. Useful activities include the Church, boxing, Youth Clubs, and prison visiting.

Attend every possible function concerned with them, especially if there is a chance of shaking hands with a member of the Royal Family.

RETIREMENT

As soon as your promotion to major-general is gazetted you must retire. Now is the time to widen your interests.

As a retired general you will have to make a speech whenever you attend a function of any kind. It is important to have a key phrase to suit each function.

Directors' meetings. "Running an

Army and running a business call for the same two basic qualities—common-sense and integrity."

Boxing tournaments. "In my battalion I always found that the chap with the guts in the boxing-ring turned out to be the chap with the guts on the battlefield."

Philanthropic societies. "We used to say in the Army that it was the fellow with too little to do that got into trouble."

Television broadcasts. "Both the commanders at Crecy/Blenheim/Waterloo/Passchendaele/Alamein fell into the same rather obvious trap."

Race-meetings. "As a young officer I was seldom off a horse."

Old Comrades' reunions. "When I think of the years in which we served together a lump comes into my throat."

DRESS

Uniform should not be worn if this can be avoided. If it must be worn it should be worn with a difference, e.g. khaki beret with blues, breeches and fieldboots with battledress.

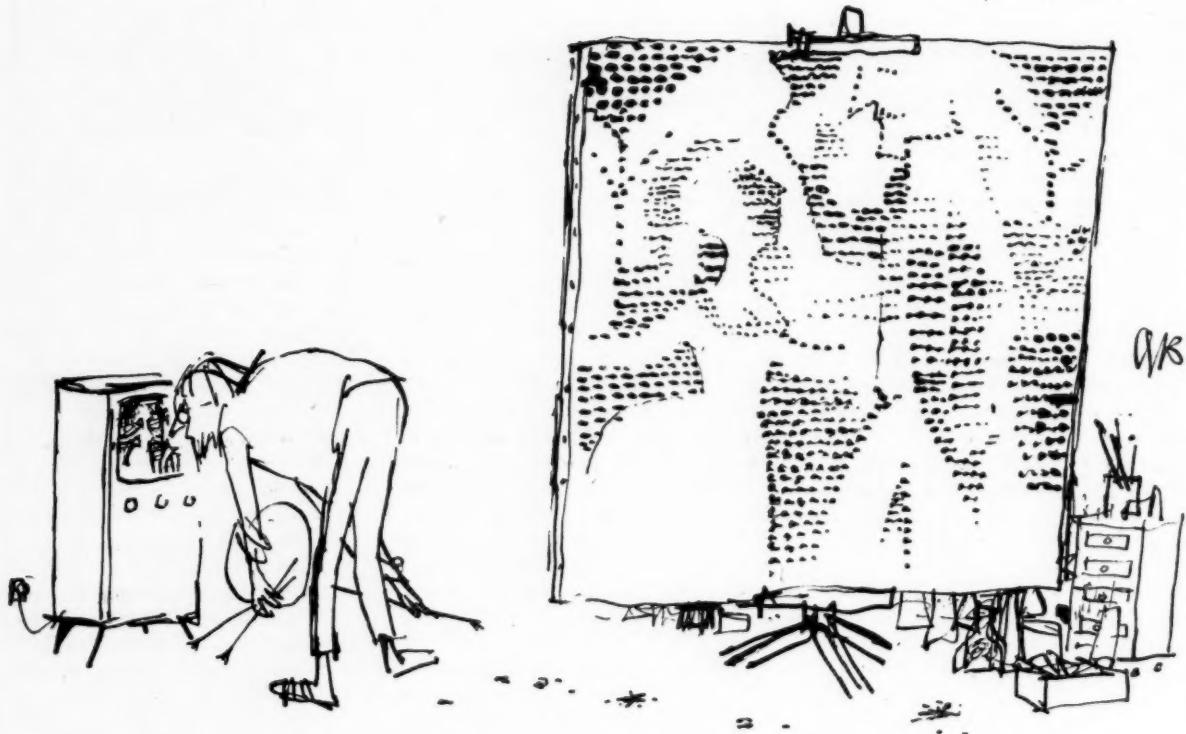
Civilian clothes, on the other hand, must not deviate from the norm of bowler hat, dark suit, umbrella, etc. Personal idiosyncrasies will suggest that you really are a civilian, not a retired officer.

APOTHEOSIS

Careful attention to the foregoing points will ensure that you will leave the Army with a reputation for having an unusually wide range of interests for a soldier. A quite modest amount of intrigue will suffice to get you the Director-Generalship of a nationalized industry or even of the B.B.C.

Everyone will remark the increased efficiency brought by your introduction of military methods. You will add a K.C.B. and C.V.O. to your C.B.E., and become a D.Litt. (Honoris Causa) of Oxford.

B. A. YOUNG



Me and Network Three

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

I WAS almost naked in the raspberries when they ran to say the B.B.C. was calling. I'd already had one shock. Straining through the dappled bushes after an elusive berry I had knelt on something soft, warm and pulsing: my other foot, but still alarming. I fought my way out of the netting in an excited state.

The voice was cool, contralto and on at least nodding terms with Planning. It wanted me to be a programme personality on Network Three; linking material, interviews, something about hobbies—"You know, tropical fish." It was not for me to question the sound-radio properties of tropical fish, and I asked instead if time was pressing, as I was having a week off, resting, in Sussex, in the soft fruit. The voice cooled about five more degrees to convey that time was always pressing in Portland Place. "We want to get on with a dummy run." And I saw them all waiting there, only lacking me;

hobbyists nervous because the youngest chameleon was getting restive, or the glue melting in the matchstick model of Southwark Cathedral.

All the same, I played hard to get, and suggested eleven on Friday morning. I would have done better to put a shirt on and go at once. The two days' grace gave me time to worry about what tie to wear, and to say at intervals into my tape-recorder, "Tell me, Mr. Shackett, how long have you been collecting these lovely old birettas?" Should I be intensely keen and sympathetic to the man from Burslem, who had brought up his home-made pipe-organ? Or would an attitude of incredulous admiration be better? "Well, here we are," I should strike off breezily, "and while you and I have been dozing in our armchairs these chilly autumn evenings, Mr. and Mrs. Grartlake, of 23 Little Upper Crescent, Woking, have been carving their children in railway sleepers . . ."

My confidence was wearing thin by Friday and showed an actual crack when my taximan, after leaving Victoria in an encouraging burst, made for a traffic thicket at the back of Grosvenor Square and hurtled to a standstill like a lawnmower driven into long grass. He switched his engine off and began to read.

If you sit long enough in the entrance-hall of Broadcasting House, as Rousseau said, you see the whole world go by. My hostess was charming, but something in her manner suggested that she'd all but done this, and she introduced me to another hostess, who pleased me at once by saying she'd just had one of my recordings played back and enjoyed it very much. I took to her and asked which one it was. "I was only listening to the voice," she said, fanning herself with a script. I didn't ask her which voice it was, because I've learned my lesson, over a long period, about joking with the B.B.C.

The suggestion of coffee in the café across the road was a surprise, but at least it made me feel better about being five minutes late. Things couldn't be quite at fever pitch in the studio after all. I said I should love that, if we had time, and on the way there I got in my story about the taximan, rather breezily. The first hostess didn't pay any attention, because I now noticed that she'd slipped away; and the second didn't pay much. It was a touch of earache, she said, and made it difficult to concentrate. We got through the first pot of coffee on earache, and spoke of friends with ear-trouble. Asian 'flu was touched on. I began to draw things back to relevancy by telling about my first broadcast ever, when a workman came in with a ladder half-way through. I'd forgotten that the B.B.C. never believes this story. It showed that I was nervous. Then, "What's become of Miss Er?" I asked. I never get names. It turned out that she wasn't concerned with our project, except in a sort of remote, overall way. My coffee-addict collaborator—second pot well on the

way by now—had been busy, and just got her to ring me.

The traffic roared and stank outside.

I looked at my watch. "Oughtn't we to be—?" I just stopped myself on another story, about my having said that to my first ever producer, because I was sitting with my back to the studio clock, and his saying "Oh, we're all right. We've twenty-five seconds yet." The B.B.C. has the idea that it excels in putting nervous broadcasters at ease, and doesn't care to hear that kind of thing. Besides, it would have involved another story about a producer at Bush House, who had warned me of what he called an "inhibited delivery," and stood in the control room while I was broadcasting, making exaggerated mouth-shapes at me through the glass, like a man stretching a face just shaved.

Then I saw the script beside her biscuit-crumbs, and asked if I might see it. There's nothing like preparedness for programme personalities. Surprised, but only faintly, she passed it across. It proved to be a talk on Vanished Islands of the Sargasso. She took up one

or two points in it and argued them, and then she asked me if I had read the billing in *Radio Times*.

"No," I said adroitly, "but what about this dummy run?"

She said she had no idea when that would be, of course. Perhaps in two or three weeks. The trouble was ideas, she said. No one seemed to have any. "There's tropical fish," she said. "But we want lots of ideas, really. The sort of things people do in their spare time. So if you have any ideas you think would do, I'd be terribly grateful, because it's really time we got something stirring on this programme."

It was then that the first hostess came in, and we had some more coffee, and they discussed rather anxiously whether the engineers had repaired the play-back in Studio 3B, and what use it was for Brian and Kenneth to attend meetings if they went back on everything they'd said in the canteen.

I couldn't contribute much to these problems, but I did tell the first hostess, frankly apropos nothing, that I'd promised to send some ideas. She did a



"Well, I don't much go for them long-haired programmes, but I sleep with it tuned to the Third and it comes on and wakes me in time for my night shift."

double-take on it, and then said "Oh, yes, for the hobbies thing. That's excellent."

When I got back I was pleasantly surprised to find that the whole affair had taken only about five hours from door to door, and the sun was still high.

Star Turn

GOOD evening. Last time I spoke to you we had a bit of a bash at the International Geophysical thingummybob, if you remember. That seemed to go down rather well, one way or another, so I thought we'd take a dekko at Television. Who dreamed it up—how it works—all that kind of thing.

After all, I daresay quite a few of you have got the old Telly laid on (*Engaging grin, transformed quickly into serious frown suitable for popular scientific inquiry*) and I suppose quite often, while you're watching some film actor being interviewed, you say to yourselves "Dash clever, but how's it done?"

(*Blurred picture of some people in a cluttered living-room watching a film actor being interviewed and wondering how it's done.*)

That was taken some time ago, but it should give you quite a good idea of

So I took my clothes off again and wrote two foolscap pages of ideas, and put my clothes on again and posted them.

A fortnight later I got a nice note from hostess two, thanking me. There was a phrase beginning "I gather from those who will be taking over the

programme shortly . . ." and it ended: "I very much enjoyed the coffee and talk."

Of course I may still hear something. Only a month has passed. I'm trying to erase the bits of interview from my recorder tape as they crop up.

By ALEX ATKINSON

the—er—the sort of thing I mean. That's an armchair the old girl—the old lady's sitting on. Uncut moquette. Or something. Anyhow.

(*Living-room fades out.*)

Well, now. Before television there was only radio, or wireless, as it's sometimes called. This was done by bunging a lot of radio waves through the air, into a kind of receiver. They travel at a heck of a lick, by the way. Here we have a radio wave (*picture of a dotted line moving jerkily from left to right*) going through the air. Now here (*picking up a pair of headphones from a table*) I have a pair of headphones. If you put a pair of these gadgets on and twiddled the knobs on the receiver the sounds used to come out of the headphones. That's if there was a programme on at the—er—at the time. (*Grins. Scratches nose. Frowns. Takes*

prompt. Walks fifteen yards, threading his way through models, charts, globes, stuffed animals, native spears, musical instruments, heliographs, etc., to another table, and picks up another pair of headphones.) This is another pair. These are brown ones. Well, brownish. (*Makes his way back to first table.*) So much for radio, then.

Of course, in a brief three-and-a-half-hour survey like this I can't hope to go into *too* much detail. I did have this loud-speaker to show you, actually (*shows it for a count of eight*), but it was cut at rehearsal. Anyhow, it gives you an idea of the strides that were made. And of course there were some jolly good programmes.

(*Picture of a page from "Radio Times."*)

But in the end a few boffin types got together and said "Look here, chaps, this is all very well, but what's the good of listening to the news if you can't see whether the announcer's wearing the tie he wore yesterday?" (*Mischiefous twinkle.*) So they went into a bit of a huddle, and that was really how television began.

(*Film of five boffins going into a huddle in a shadowy hut. They have a big piece of paper spread out on the table, covered with diagrams and quadratic equations. One points to a diagram with the stem of his pipe. The others nod gravely, saying "Rhubarb, rhubarb, high frequency deflector-coils." The first one nods in agreement, and smugly lights his pipe.*)

What they did, you see, they rigged up a kind of a thing called an Emitron camera to take the place of the microphone, and another thing called a cathode-ray tube to take the place of the loud-speaker, and all that happens is that the picture is broken up into bits, and transmitted chunk by chunk, and put together again at the other end, so that you think you're getting it all at once, although actually you're not. Here's a scale model of an Emitron

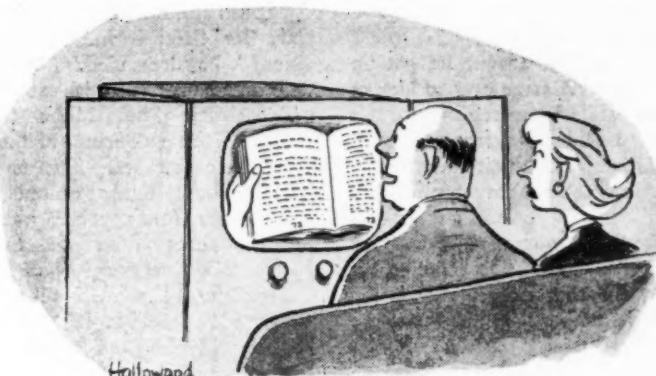


camera. (*Indicates a large, glittering model which revolves at a touch and took eight men three months to prepare.*) There's the window, you see. (*Points out various parts of model, some out of sight.*) That's the lens. Here's a mosaic screen. There's a bit of wire to take the impulses into an amplifier. Round here you have the electron beam coming out of the gun. This . . . I don't know what this is. That's a deflector coil. And in here, that's the amplifier. Quite a large one. You can't see it.

(Picture of some penguins sliding down rocks.)

Those are some penguins. Inquisitive little chaps. You see a lot of them in the Antarctic.

Now, of course, what you're asking yourselves is this: "How does the picture get on to my screen?" Well, it's quite simple, really, the way these chaps worked it out. Take a typical picture. Suppose we have a housewife from Worcester (*Film of a street in Worcester*) telling a chap the author of *Robinson Crusoe* for twenty-five pounds. Here's a scale model, to show you what I mean. (*Climbs up a ladder to a scale model of a housewife from Worcester, floodlit.*) It's a bit over life-size, actually, but it works. (*Presses a switch. The housewife's lips move. One hand goes up to push hair out of her eyes.*) Now, when her picture comes charging through the air in bits, a whole crowd of electrons are banging away like billy-ho at the inside of the flat end of the tube, dashing to and fro



"Whether it's making maximum use of the medium's possibilities or not, I find it remarkably absorbing."

at a great rate, and producing light and shade.

(Picture of a small dot.)

That's an electron. So what you see is twenty-five pictures a second, but you think you only see one, and there you are.

(Picture of penguins walking about.)

Those are the penguins again. They're walking about. (*Gestures angrily for the penguins to be taken away. Realizes we're watching him. Grins instead.*) Very inquisitive little chaps. (*Comes down ladder, broodingly.*)

(Voice off: "Look at the time!")

Well, there you have it. And I think it's important to remember that you can see things on television that you can't

see anywhere else. It's a splendid example of a lot of chaps all pulling together for the good of the team—pooling their ideas, and thinking up games, and so on. Because, after all, this is a wonderful world we're living in—(*map of the world, upside-down*)—and the more we see of it the better, especially now that all these new young nations are taking their place as equal partners in the Commonwealth.

(*Film of painted Africans jumping up and down with feathers in their hair.*) Good night.

(*Solemn music. Benediction from R. Dimbleby. Credits. Three minutes' silence.*)

The English Channel

By MARSHALL PUGH

THROUGH the wall I could hear Murdoch Maconachie's brutal beat upon the Giant Bongoe and from the frenzied footwork I could tell that Hamish Gowrie and his girl friend Big Stockings had mastered the Corta Jaca movement and were working up towards the Boto Fogo.

Frankly I felt that they were wasting time. A package deal programme of nostalgia for the Scottish dance halls in the 1940s should never have been done on speculation. For the television planners it could have only limited appeal. But I kept an open mind. Desperate for fresh ideas and talent, Scottish independent television was about to begin. You can never tell what

will jell, and the samba is all but a Scottish folk-dance, by custom and repute.

My own idea was better, a Rob Roy MacGregor serial in thirty-nine parts. The clan-gathering jingle was finished and the first light-footed foray made. In dreams I could behold it networked to the world. Once it was showing on the public screens in Tokyo and driving Robin Hood from the market sets in old Bagdad I would be on cigar-swapping terms with Lew Grade.

Meantime my working conditions left much to be desired. First there was the samba session in the dining room. Then the light in the bedroom was wae. Undaunted by the hobgoblin of

topicality we have always called our main dormitory The Snake-pit. It was no place to be working out throwaway lines for a comic foot-gillie.

And so for inspiration I turned to a series in *The Weekly Scotsman* from a book on a MacGregor of sorts. There I read "Himself would be having a word with you, Glengyle." Personally I would rather have written "Himself would be after having a word with you, Glengyle." But that's how it always is. One artist always fires another's mind.

At the sound of the All-Clear I started. "That will be Maconachie on the maracca," Struan Soutar said bitterly from his bed. "It's a wholly Highland instrument, I'm sure, and

essential to the samba, suggesting a breeze in the trees."

When I did not answer he got up from his bed and came over to look at my script, while I was reading about a Stuart who said his name was royal. Now this is a phrase that sticks in my gut. It is well known that we Pughs were in Scotland before any of the Gaels, royal or common. The fact that my own great-grandfather came up for air from the thin atmosphere of the Rhondda is neither here nor there.

"What's this?" asked Soutar suddenly, with his blue-black finger on my script and resting on the words "Hault, hault!" This phrase, he held, might have been used by Richard's Crusaders, "but it ill becomes an English soldier at the charge of Killiecrankie," he said. Then he was off, picking holes in everything. To have the Red Comyn with Rob Roy in a single close-up was space-and-time fiction, no less. Soutar had no inkling of the need to simplify issues for a world audience, especially now the television's spreading over areas of vast illiteracy.

"And what is more," he added, "bad and desperate though your script is, you'll never get it on."

He let his hands idle on my rough notes, fingerprinting some of my best key colour words like "mislike" and "jalouse," "speckled trout" and "black-cock's feather." "Fine stirring phrases," he said, "to remind us all of the time when Scotland was a nation and the blood went leaping to the head. But they'll never ring in the tube. For what would you consider Scottish about Scottish Television, so-called?"

He was off. Resignedly I put away my fine-lined, cream-laid scripting jotter and settled down to finalize my laundry list and match up socks.

Larry.



"You'll have looked at the early plans for Scottish independent television?" he demanded. "It begins well enough with a Scottish extravaganza with Alistair Sim, Moira Shearer, Deborah Kerr and many of the other expensive expatriates. Then how does it go on? Eighty-five per cent networked programmes. And what is so profoundly Scottish about *Meet the Stars in Blackpool* or *Emergency—Ward Ten?*?"

In fairness I pointed out that the Glasgow Police Pipe Band had been booked, besides the Clyde Valley Stompers and a comedian from Kirkintilloch. But Soutar swept this aside.

"Aye," he said, "and there will be a Scottish brains trust. There will also be a thing called *Fanfare* with the jugglers, the fire eaters, the sword swallowers with whom our nation is so liberally endowed. But will they be remembered after *Criss-Cross Quiz*? Mark my word," he went on, "two-channel television is here to stay. It must touch our lives for good or ill. And you can take it that, with the Corporation at one end and this Scottish Television lot at the other, two-channel television will be as disastrous for us as it has been for the English. On one channel you have nothing but the descending don and on the other nothing but the rising showman."

With all his old pamphleteering glibness he said that two-channel television had intensified the English social struggle. According to him the effect on the English was worse even than their original game of view and non-view. The class distinctions were becoming steadily more acute. The very intellectuals who used to be without sets and who had looked down on television from the dreaming spires of their polytechnics had now become cowboys-and-Indians snobs.

Still affecting to despise B.B.C. news with its gimmickery of whirling tape recordings and phone calls from abroad, they now claimed that they couldn't be pulled away from "Dragnet."

On the other hand, he said, consider the business-man on the 8.30 from Kingswood, Surrey, who feels so much safer now that we've dropped a hydrogen bomb. He is still a B.B.C. fanatic and no worse

than the fellow in the blazer and the ex-something who boasts that he'll never have his set converted.

And this, said Soutar, was but the beginning of the game. To add a touch of early Ealing to this tragicomedy the television authorities themselves were heavily involved.

Both sides were proving their superior popularity by brandishing the most suspect statistics since the digit-happy days of economic warfare. By comparison, Soutar said, the road accident figures, the juvenile delinquency charts, the divorce rates and the cost of living indices were miraculously exact.

"Now," he went on, hopefully hoarse and searching in his rucksack for the jujubes, "you can imagine what will happen if this argument is carried to its outcome, north of the Tweed?" I could.

"You will remember our little frailty of fanaticism?" he asked. I did.

It would be different, he said, if we had a truly independent Scottish programme which would really serve the nation, help Scotland to refloat as the Ark of the Western World and put down Subtopia on Loch Lomond.

There would be no two-channel terror then, for no one would listen to the B.B.C. Why should they, with independent clan culture for the Rose Street intellectual and cosy Glasgow family programmes for the proles?

For a moment he stopped, separating bog-myrtle from his jujube. "But it is not to be," he concluded. "Instead we have Scottish Television, run by a Canadian, with an English advertising manager, a South African news editor and an American director of programmes. You would think it was a Unesco job in Gaza."

For a moment there was quiet in the Snake-pit. Then we heard the wild skirl of Hamish Gowrie's pipes in perfect two-four samba time.

 & &

"Now I have more news—which may explain why Mr. Purdom was waving an enormous Florentine sword when he dashed up the gangway recently to greet his wife. There was nothing more sinister in it than the fact that Purdom is to make 39 TV films called 'Sword of Freedom.'"

News Chronicle

Sinister enough.



"Have you anything perhaps a little lower Fi?"

Two Years On

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

A DINNER to celebrate the triumphant progress of Independent Television was held at Claridge's the other night. Overflow diners saw and heard the speakers on screens linked by closed circuit TV. Dress was optional but mostly sharkskin.

The chairman and convener, Mr. S. Hartbern, said that it was no secret that the Programme Contractors (*applause*) were now out of the red (*applause*), or as damn near out of the red as made no matter (*laughter*). The last two years had been a very difficult period, a very difficult period indeed. "We embarked on this great venture," Mr. Hartbern said, "conscious only of our mission, a cultural mission aimed at the splendid but undernourished millions of our island home.

"We were heavily criticized (*laughter*). The stuffier intellectuals said that we intended to debase television, to fill the domestic screen with ribaldry, cheap melodrama, giveaway stunt shows,

glamour and noxious advertisements. They said we were in TV for what we could get out of it. (*Cries of "Shame!"*)

"Well, we are now two years old and the country is two years nearer to the fulfilment of its cultural hopes and aspirations. The other day I received a letter—very touching it was too—from a viewer in Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, and with your permission, gentlemen, I should like to read it to you. 'Dear Mr. Hartbern,' it said, 'I just want you to know what a tremendous difference the ITA has made to our lives. We are an ordinary working-class family with a piano and an old *Daily Herald* set of the works of Dickens. Until your programmes appeared on TV we had little interest in education and culture. We used to look at the B.B.C.'s "What's My Line?" once a week, but that was about all the high-brow stuff we could take. What a difference now! You have opened our eyes to the glories of English literature

and the world's music. You have taken us to lands across the seas (especially America) and tried to show us how the other half lives. You have stimulated our brains with your educational games and quizzes and through your exciting ads. you have taught us to look intelligently at the goods we buy.'

"I used to think that the B.B.C. was some sort of god, but now I realize that it is all sport, Lady Barnett and Jack Payne. Give me ITV every time!'"

As Mr. Hartbern completed the reading of this letter his cheeks glistened with tears (clearly seen on closed-circuit TV) and there was a little embarrassed silence. Then, shrugging manfully, he pulled himself together and said he would say no more, but leave his audience to the tender mercies of Lord Southbank (Amalgamated Re-gurgitation).

Lord Southbank said that all would have been touched by Mr. Hartbern's speech. For his [Lord Southbank's]

part he wanted only to remind the company of a few of its most memorable achievements. There was "Toothcomb" ("the adventures of Sherlock Holmes brought up to date, revitalized and made into a powerful weapon in the war against crime"), there was "Never Say Quits" ("Surely the most enlightened programme of popular economics ever to be screened"), there was "I Adore Annie" ("Jane Austen plus"), "Send for Night-Sister" ("first-rate public relations for the National Health Service"), "Saturday Sensational" ("a boost for the British Council and the Council of Industrial Design") and many, many other shows of genuine cultural merit.

Mr. Bullinson (of Incorporated TelEviSion) said that the new schools programme had proved an unqualified success. There had been some initial opposition from muddle-headed pedagogues, but once it had been demonstrated that we were *au fait* with modern methods of indoctrination, eleven-plus cramming and G.C.E. requirements the response had been splendid. "The poor old B.B.C.," said Mr. Bullinson, "is still in the blackboard jungle stage of development" (*derisive laughter*).

Finally the chairman introduced Lord Yunion as "the only aesthete in the Labour Party" (*laughter*).

Lord Yunion said that the ITA had proved its political independence time and time again. In fact it was if anything rather more to the Left than the B.B.C. It featured the Oxford don, Alan Taylor; it had the temerity to criticize a predominantly reactionary Press in "What the Papers Say"; it made "Panorama" look like "a Sunday School lantern lecture" with "This Week"; and its "News and Weather" were models of "propriety bordering on accuracy." He himself was particularly pleased with the daily quiz shows which proved that "Independent TV is no less anxious than the Labour Party to secure a wholesale redistribution of the nation's wealth."

Between speeches guests were entertained by Jack Solomons, Diana Dors, Sabrina, Douglas Fairbanks, Val Parnell, the Luton Girls' Choir and the South Pier (Blackpool) Nudettes, and to wind up a very fine evening Tommy Steele sang rock 'n' roll arrangements of "Rule, Britannia!" and the Enigma Variations of Elgar.



THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE other day a partridge
Built its nest beneath a cartridge
Of the new atomic cannon they've installed in Central Park.
We've just received a cable
From a couple who are able
On a luminescent table to play Scrabble in the dark.
At the Waldorf, we might mention,
There's a medical convention
Where the doctors all are coming down with viruses.
And instead of using parchment
A museum up in Larchmont
Sends its cocktail invitations on papyrus.
Oh, it's all so indicative, it's all so indicative,
It's all so indica-dicka-dicative:
Without being overly explicit or explicative,
We tell you once again it's all exceedingly indicative.

A psychiatric panel
On a television channel
Has a show entitled "Guess What My Neurosis Is?"
And an artist in Damascus has
Disposed of two Velasquezes
And bought himself a pair of Grandma Moses-es.
From the spring until the leaves drop
We just love to ride and eavesdrop
On the bus that goes up Madison or Lexington
And we heard a matron's proph'ey:
"They've legalized autopsy
But we'll never let them get much vivisexing done."
Oh, it's all so indicative, etc.

A diner on Delancey
In an effort to be fancy
Has proclaimed itself a "Delicatessissimo"
And a steak and chop and mutton place
That opened up on Sutton Place
Is advertising Veal Scalopianissimo.
A scientist in Ocean
Park, New Jersey, has a notion
For developing a motion that is practically perpetual.
Commuters from Connecticut
Are pondering the etiquette
Of tipping the conductors when the trains arrive on schedule . . .
Oh, it's all so indicative, it's all so indicative
Without being overly explicit or explicative
In phrases not too sibilant or labial or fricative
We tell you it's indicative, the way we set it down.
Oh, it's all so exciting, so inviting, so delighting—
And it's all in the writing
It's The Talk of the Town!

ED FISHER



La Prima Donna è Mobile

By CHARLES REID

THE sea around Ischia was clear blue soup and reached simmering point when Maria Callas swam in it. Miss Callas is among the very few singers whose lightest word makes a thousand teleprinters waken up and chatter in the middle of the night.

It seems only yesterday that the *Norma* ramps were creaking under her tread. Folding massive arms after she had clipped Druidical ivy, she looked like Abundance (or perhaps the lady's name is Solvency) over the portico of the Bank of Scotland. On Ischia she was seventy pounds lighter than in '52 and as near-nubile as anything you are ever likely to see in *Oggi*. A lustre-chandelier sun shone every day. Walnut from top to toe, Miss Callas could have played *Aida* (not the same thing as singing her) without a grain of make-up.

Then into northbound planes.

At Turnhouse airport a humid wind buffeted its way towards volcanic fastnesses under a tumbled sky set with spokes of bleak light—a Last Judgment décor if ever there was one. Crossing the tarmac Miss Callas, bundled in fur, delicately bunched her shoulders and said "I am freezing. But freezing." She made the same point at hourly intervals for a week.

Next morning she looked out of her hotel bedroom window upon Edinburgh through slant black eyes which recall the Nefertiti tomb portraits, the Queen in a pack of playing cards and the

Serpent in *Paradise Lost*. "Do you like the view of the Castle?" somebody asked hopefully. "Nice," said Miss Callas. "I can just about see it. This window is dirty."

At the Festival Press Club a notice went up that Madame Callas would not be taking part in that morning's dress rehearsal of *La Sonnambula*. "Milan tell us," added an expansive P.R.O., "that Miss Callas won't be taking part in any rehearsals at all."

Gossip writers relaxed accordingly and drifted towards the bar.

At precisely that moment Miss Callas was making her first sleepwalking entry on the King's Theatre stage, simultaneously with a spotlight that jiggled anxiously in search of a moon painted on the backcloth.

When this news belatedly reached the gossips their eyes popped resentfully. "You tell us she's not going to rehearse," they boomed, "and she rehearses after all."

"What do you expect?" parried the P.R.O. "Miss Callas is a prima donna, and we've all forgotten what prima donnas are like. They do the most unexpected things."

Taking off her pale horn-rims during an interval break, Miss Callas held hands in the stalls with her rich husband, Giovanni Meneghini, who has a fine senatorial sweep of hair and ought always to be in toga and curule chair. Her smiles beamed and flashed in all directions. They even helped an electrician to find the painted moon.

So cordial was she that people who had read in the papers how she was a Tigress crept cautiously from under their carapaces and asked questions about this and that.

Did she find the King's a "singable" theatre? Not really. It seemed to her rather a dead one. You sent out notes and waited for them to come back and they didn't. And the tininess of the stage! "We're treading on each other's feet. In fact I'm treading on my own."

She promised to tell me more at her press conference. "I've just heard that it's fixed for Tuesday at 10.30 a.m."

On Tuesday at 10.25 the world's press packed in close rows, hunched forward anticipatorily every time the door creaked. The Lord Provost

moved graciously among us with chain of office and keen, switched-on smile. Our elbows were wearing holes in our knees. We stubbed cigarettes prematurely, wastefully lighted fresh ones, breathed nothing but blue smoke. Most of us fingered bits of paper on which we had framed cunning questions.

Our talk, as the cigarette fug thickened, was of Callas's performance the previous night. And of certain surrealist concomitants. Of the electronic whistle an octave above the highest high notes which went on throughout Act II. Of sunlight from the Swiss valley which somebody kept turning in and out during Act I. Of the floral feature on castors, incorporating village pump, which chorus ladies trundled on during a total eclipse so that Miss Callas should have something to sit on while singing her last coloratura number but one.

"Say what you like," interpolated the Lord Provost, "Miss Callas is a fine singer and a great actress."

At 10.45 no sign of Miss Callas. A Festival official coughed nervously and told us over rimless glasses he was sure she'd be along presently. At 10.50 the Lord Provost, tired of waiting, climbed into his state car and made off with smile unswitched. The world's press, or some of it, hung on until 11.30. Apologizing for Miss Callas's non-appearance, the Festival official produced two other Italian singers in her stead. Through an interpreter they praised Edinburgh wildly, with worried smiles. Nobody listened much.

No news of Miss Callas at Miss Callas's hotel. The truth is she was lunching with a family party at an hotel half a mile away. Under a pot-shaped hat of plaited black straw, she ate salad from a glass bowl and, apropos the press conference, said she was as disappointed as everybody else. If the organizers had had the courtesy to fix a suitable day and a reasonable time she would have been delighted to attend.

Edinburgh now has some dim, provisional idea what *prime donne* are. Previously the town thought Malibran (to name one of them) was the new hormone-enriched breakfast food which regroots your glands and leads to success with bank managers.



"No, thanks. I don't smoke."



“Come On In . . . !”

IN the sound and the smell and the spray of the thunderous ocean

Inert, I enjoy a display of perpetual motion.

I delight in the flight of the gulls,

And the happy horizon hulls,

The grey rough rocks that circle the cove,

The girl in green and the charmer in mauve;

Now and then I observe the glee

Of those who have entered the sea—

And I thankfully think “Not me.”

So you come like a bomb, my boy,

With your odd request,

Killer of calm and joy

In a soul at rest.

It's lovely, I know, in the sea, although

Your beautiful teeth do chatter,

You are shivering too, and your lips are blue,

But that, you may say, don't matter,

For the young, I am told, don't suffer from cold—

Unjust if it's true:

Of course, I'm not *properly* old,

But at my sort of age we do.

You are young, little man, but we all have tried

To foster and fan your logical side.

Is it sensible, boy, is it sane?

Here am I in a mood of bliss.

Why change to a state of pain?

Can you see any point in this?

I know—I shall have to unfrock,

Feeling a feeble fool,

Behind an inadequate rock.

I shall drop my shirt in a pool,

And where shall I find a place

That's safe for a spectacle case?

And the awful walk in the wind on the hard wet sand to the sea—

Only a cricketer knows what a walk of the sort can be!
Bright eyes are watching, of course, to see if Papa is brave,
As I wade like a worn-out horse, one eye on the first foul wave.

If you would bring me a yacht I could show you a startling dive,

But cold-water wading is not my favourite way to arrive.

There are stones, for tearing the toes,

And jellyfish, I suppose?

And yet, though I flinch, I know what a glow, what a flame

Will cover me, inch by inch, as I towel the frozen frame.

I savour the sweet, the smug conceit,

The sense of a high, heroic feat.

Thus Hercules must have felt as he told at table

The gallant particulars of what he had done in the Stable.

I shall cry to the sky “I'm a fish!

I have been in the sea! I have swum!

Pneumonia? Poisoning? Pish!”

All right, little monkey. We come.

A. P. H.



In the City

Council Chamber and Office

NOBODY seems to like the look of the Council on Prices, Productivity and Incomes. The unions don't like it because none of its members, Lord Cohen, Sir Dennis Robertson and Sir Ernest Howitt, happens to be a trade union leader. The Conservatives don't like it, apparently, because its composition threatens to disturb the traditional apartheid of judiciary and legislature. The economists don't like it because two members of the Council are not economists. The City doesn't like it because one of them is.

I don't like it because it is some five years too late, and because its findings—as predictable as Christmas—are already stale. Incomes have been put last in the Council's title either for reasons of diplomacy or assonance, but everybody knows that Lord Cohen's real target is inflation and that rising wages are the primary cause of inflation. The Council in due course will point out that Britain is in grave danger of pricing itself out of the export markets, that wages (and profits) must toe the line of economic prudence, that we must improve productivity and so increase the size of the national cake... or else. The newspapers will print decent summaries and their readers will yawn their way to the football forecasts and Premium Bond draw results.

What we need is a Commission charged with the duty of finding an alternative system of wage settlement. If we want full employment without the law of the jungle (free bargaining) we have to make plans for full employment and systematic afforestation. If we want an ordered, productive society twenty years from now we must be prepared to discuss the abolition of unrestricted private enterprise in wage bargaining now.

Electronic brains made so much noise in the news a few years ago that many people have taken their adoption by more progressive businesses for granted. Unfortunately, this is not so: computers are expensive to make and can only fit their customers' requirements after long and careful tailoring. But the signs are

that most of the experimental work has been completed and that the handful of companies capable of producing these "brains" are now ready to deliver the goods.

There is plenty of room for automation in the office. One insured worker in every six in Britain is a clerk and the total of wages paid to clerical workers is not far short of £2,000 million a year—a sum equal to the combined trading profits of all public companies. Once the computers have proved their worth (at the moment only a handful are in operation) it is almost certain that industry and commerce will queue for them, and for the investor with an interest in the British Tabulating Machine Co. ("Hollerith"), Elliott Bros. or Powers-Samas (a subsidiary of

Vickers) such a development would obviously be beneficial.

Other companies worth watching in the office revolution stakes are Ellams Duplicator, Roneo, Gas Purification and Chemical (marketing the Grundig "Stenorette" tape recorder), Gestetner, Oliver and Imperial Typewriter.

In technical matters of business management and office routine the Americans are well ahead of the British—not in scientific progress itself but in the speed with which mechanical and electronic equipment is put into general use. To compete effectively with National Cash Register, Burroughs Adding Machine, Addressograph and Remington-Rand the British leaders need only the encouragement of our domestic industrialists and commercial entrepreneurs.

MAMMON



In the Country

West is Still West

IT is not often that one's worst fears prove unfounded. Generally speaking, pessimism is a most reliable commodity. But in the matter of the effects of television on the countryside all warnings have proved unnecessary and most estimates completely wrong.

I can remember writing an article about this subject five years ago. With succulent gloom I then foretold that the impact of TV on the villages would be to erase the last traces of locality; and that within a few years all counties would seem the same as each was reduced to the lowest common denominator of cathode-ray resistance. It seemed a reasonable view, though on second thoughts I wonder why I assumed that television would do what the radio by itself had failed to achieve. However, it seemed likely to many people then that local dialects, myths and superstitions were bound to be flattened and lost by mutual participation in common parlour games. Some greybeards said that television would mean the extinction of the Welsh language. But that piece of optimism has gone wildly astray. And after five years of the Box we can report that Cornishmen are still as arrogant in their Duchy as they were and Devonians are just as smug as ever.

Our insularity seems impenetrable: we are impervious to any influence other than our own good opinion of ourselves. What the countryman sees on the screen may or may not entertain him. It certainly doesn't impinge on his way of life. In spite of our gaping at a hundred programmes on the kitchen front and viewing delectable recipes cooked before our eyes, we persist in our dull pastry way. Devon continues to live on pastry. It is damned if it is going to change its diet even for the better. So it is too with clothes: our women will not miss the dress programme, but nothing will make them change their fashions. What is bad enough for us is bad enough for our daughters. We view the programmes with something more than detachment. Even the sports events have failed to shake us. Skittles are still played here. We haven't taken to tennis or ice hockey, though we watch these items regularly. Perhaps we don't believe Wimbledon really exists.

But it is with the meteorological reports that the countrymen's indifference to television is most apparent. I've often watched farmers while the weather report is given. They look on tolerantly; then go home and consult their corns or their seaweed.

RONALD DUNCAN

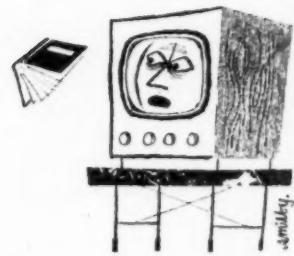


Service Cuts, Latest

"Temporary Generals for sea, country & Scotland. £5 wk. (No late dinner)." *Advertisement in Daily Telegraph*



CRITICISM



BOOKING OFFICE

Price of Punch

A History of Punch. R. G. G. Price. Collins, 30/-

EDITORS without a sense of humour; light essayists whose lavender-bag whimsicality was secretly fuelled on brandy and pornography; artists who painted *trompe l'œil* cakes on walls to tantalize urchins . . . these are but a few of the paradoxical aspects of Mr. Punch's personality as revealed in this affectionately perceptive and scrupulously detailed biography. Mr. Price has done the old nympholet proud, catching his peculiarly British blend of hypocrite and satyr while chronicling his one hundred and sixteen years of active if wavering reflection with meticulous nicety.

It cannot have been an easy book to write, for this is an incredibly complex phenomenon. Everybody's autobiography contains a chapter on his relations with *Punch*. Its history is the history of History's looking-glass, an inextricable mix-up of subject and object. Read it through Marxist spectacles and you are watching the deployment of the class struggle. Read it—mainly between the lines—with your Freudian phalluscope and you will be detecting murmurs from the unconscious of the Athenæum. As for the editorial personality, nothing could be less like the Friend, in the children's hymn, who never changes. It is bewilderingly fluid according to period, editor, and staff. One of the special merits of Mr. Price's book is that it provides a definitive guide to this Protean entity, at one moment a gusty Bohemian, at another a don *manqué*.

The essential seriousness of the matter was expressed early on in 1846, by Douglas Jerrold in a letter to Dickens: "I am convinced that the world will get tired (at least I hope so) of this eternal guffaw at all things . . . Unless Punch gets a little back to his occasional gravities, he'll be sure to suffer." Editors who have neglected this maxim seem to have developed into masters of the insipid, faultless saboteurs.

Nostalgia is an inseparable element in *Punch's* composition, and Mr. Price's earlier chapters give you a strong yearning for the snug, or snug-seeming, leather-padded life of the early nineteenth-century man of letters when euphoria was the everyday moment of the hour. *Punch* by gaslight was often fiercely radical—especially in its earliest phase. Mr. Price charts the ideological graph throughout in relation to the rise



to and consolidation of power by the new middle classes. He is interesting about the role of Thackeray here in "steering" the paper. (Thackeray sometimes liked to give you the impression that he, and he alone, by his extraordinary perspicience had foreseen and somehow averted a vast national catastrophe whose accompanying horrors included bloody revolution and frightful libertinism.) Politically, the mood that suited *Punch*, like all satirists, best was one of ambidextrous hostility. It is distressing, yet not perhaps altogether untimely, to recall how the death of the Prince Consort operated a fair-play rule which "stopped attacks on the Crown and it took time for the prolonged widowhood to rouse comment."

Mr. Punch's viscerotonic side and all

that conviviality, reaching its apex in the Jubilee dinner whose glorious menu is reproduced in full, is given proper attention. It is interesting to compare the extracts from Silver's Diary of the *Punch* dinners in the 'sixties, which Mr. Price quotes, with the Magny dinners across the channel as recorded in the Goncourt Journals. British boyishness is in sharp contrast to French worldliness.

There is a fine gallery of characters to which the artists, particularly some of the earlier nineteenth-century figures, make notable contributions. There are numerous good stories. A favourite is likely to be the one about how George Morrow, when Art Editor, brought Seaman a drawing that depended on an octopus's flooding the surrounding sea with ink. "Seaman liked the caption but looked worried and said: 'George, eh, where does the octopus discharge the ink from?' Morrow replied, 'Well Owen, I'm afraid it is from the, eh, anus.' 'What a pity. Then of course we cannot use it.' 'Eh, Owen, I understand that in an octopus the anus is between the eyes.' 'Oh, in that case we'll take it.'" Another Morrow story, about how he dreamed the King was at a banquet and said to him "I see the next course is lobster. I shall have to go and change into my Admiral's uniform," is psychologically interesting as an example of Irish obsessive surrealism.

Lovers of the nineteenth century may be inclined to linger over the first half of the book. In fact a special feature of it is the attention devoted to the *Punch* of the twentieth century, both during the Edwardian afterglow and during the temporary stabilization between the wars. The only period which Mr. Price might be said to neglect is the first world war itself. Otherwise his thoroughness is encyclopaedic. Fashions in jokes and the technicalities of reproduction processes, as well as contributors, are catalogued with loving care. Yet never, not even when he is delving at his deepest into the forms of light verse most popular with civil servant contributors *circa* 1912, does he lose sight of the wood for the trees, and degenerate



"By the way, Comrade Natasha, has the new expurgated edition of the telephone directory been issued yet?"

into a mere house-biographer. Everything is strictly related, as befits an historian, to the current of the time. He finishes with a lively appreciation of the present, and the peculiar difficulties entailed in reflecting our hideous time with its multifrom threats of annihilation.

MAURICE RICHARDSON

The Others and Richard Sordello. Alberta Murphy. *Cape*, 15/-

The loaded brilliance of Miss Murphy's style may disconcert some readers, who will be upset to find it necessary to read almost every sentence with a concentration most people are unwilling to give to any novel. But the reward is laughter. The framework of the fable is farcical: the spring of its action is the desultory quest of Richard Sordello, a young and none too fragrant taxi-driver and violinist, for the sum of forty-three dollars and twenty cents from each of the other possible fathers—apart from himself—of the impending child of Emily, the pretty barmaid at the Ophelia Tavern. (Her husband worked out the sum.) But the important quality of the book is its surface texture: the beautiful oddity of its characters, and the inspired invention and balanced inconsequence of its narrative manner and dialogue. It is a stimulating pleasure to read something of which it is literally true to say that not merely the next incident but the next word is quite impossible to predict.

R. M.

English Art 1625-1714. Margaret Whinney and Oliver Millar. *Oxford*, 50/-

Sir Christopher Wren, an excellent judge in such matters, thought that "our English artists are dull enough at

Inventions but when once a foreigne patterne is sett they imitate so well that they commonly exceed the original." Yet when that most discerning art-lover Charles I imported Van Dyck and Rubens as Court painters he seems to have offered too heady a draught of continental sophistication to be assimilated. Another century was to pass and duller, less aesthetically-minded monarchs ascend the throne before English painting and sculpture really blossomed. On the other hand a native, Inigo Jones, set a pattern for architecture which proved vastly more inspiring. The editor of the *Oxford History of English Art* was wise to take a leaf for once out of the Cambridge Histories and entrust the volume on this rich, complex and paradoxical age to more than one expert. The result of this break with precedent is quite the most balanced volume in the series so far; and by a notable display of taste and self-denial the authors have produced that rarest of birds, a really readable book on English art-history.

F. W.

Henry Brougham. Frances Hawes. *Cape*, 25/-

This is a good piece of historical biography for the Common Reader. Today Brougham is a surprisingly dim figure, remembered mainly for having once been vivid. Clever without being profound, always interesting and never trusted, versatile, crafty, warm-hearted, good company and a hypnotic orator, Brougham remained consistently devoted to three causes—the abolition of slavery, popular education and legal reform—however many moonbeams he cooked in his heated brain.

Miss Hawes, who has had access to Lady Brougham's diary, balances the exuberant eccentric with the kindly family man. She follows Professor Aspinall on his relations with the Whigs and defends him against the charge of treachery; but her chief interest is in the neglected reformer, whose projects were carried into effect by his rhetoric and flair for press relations and who, so strong was the contemporary mistrust, has lost the credit for them. *Punch* always had an amused and affectionate respect for him and it is his mask that is being pulled along at the foot of Doyle's cover.

R. G. G. P.

63: Dream Palace. James Purdy. *Gollancz*, 12/6

Circulated privately at first, the title "Novella" and nine short stories in this collection awakened, we are told, "extraordinary attention among writers both in the United States and over here." The present volume is partly dedicated to Dame Edith Sitwell, and Mr. John Cowper Powys describes the author as "the best kind of original genius of our day." It is hard to see why: the Novella is hysterically novelettish, overcharged, and clumsily written; its opening sentence

("Do you ever think about Fenton Riddleway?" Parkhearth Cratty asked the greatwoman one afternoon . . .) seems to indicate an almost total lack of feeling for words. Despotic mothers and torturedly maternal wives abound, repressed homosexuality and psychological transvestism are predominant motifs: the "greatwoman" is addressed as Grainger; the homicidal mixed-up kid's bug-bitten younger brother is called Claire; in one story the husband of a middle-aged Baby Doll named Peaches Maud is dismissed from his factory for "looking at boys." The shorter pieces, however, show evidence that Mr. Purdy, his obsessions outgrown, will eventually write for *The New Yorker* like any other American "original genius."

J. M. R.

Proust and Literature. Walter A. Strauss. *Harvard. Oxford University Press*, 38/-

Nostalgia: A Psychoanalytic Study of Proust. Milton L. Miller. *Gollancz*, 21/-

The books about Proust continue to stream out. Here are two, both by Americans, and both good. Mr. Strauss draws attention to the various formative influences and literary tastes of Proust. This was well worth doing. Tolstoy emerges as a more important figure in this context than might be thought, and Proust's dislike of Saint-Beuve is closely examined. Proust said in so many words that he felt a peculiar sympathy for English and American writing, so that it is just that a great deal of his present position in European literature is due to the admiration he so early evoked in this country. Dr. Miller's investigation of the psychoanalytical aspect is done with both appreciation and common sense; although not without a slight note of regret towards the end that Proust did not live a healthier and more matter-of-fact life: the voice of that popular optimism that even the most intelligent Americans find difficulty in keeping entirely under control. So far from overdoing the psychoanalysis, it would perhaps have been interesting to have heard the theories carried even further. It is interesting that *The Well-Loved*, by Thomas Hardy, was considered by Proust himself to be a novel with a somewhat similar aim to his own.

A. P.

Collected Poems 1930-1955. George Barker. *Faber*, 18/-

The True Confession of George Barker. *Parton Press*, 10/6

Of all contemporary poets Mr. Barker is the best equipped to undertake an epic or narrative work. He needs space, a lot of it, to develop his themes, he is always bursting out of the already loose technical forms he chooses (although he has written some fine sonnets), he can generalize impressively about man, society, history. In his best poems—"Calamiterror," "Vision of England," "Elegy on Spain"—his work moves far

beyond the poet's obvious egoism to make statements that could have been made only in poetic form. Sometimes grandiose, his poems have frequently a real grandeur. Beneath a slapdash surface they are often most skilfully organized. Stuffed with puns, alliteration and false rhymes, they drop from rhetoric into an effective Wordsworthian flatness. When will Mr. Barker write his "Prelude"? His "True Confession," a longish, uneven poem timidly omitted by the publishers from his collected works (it was attacked as pornographic after a Third Programme broadcast) has been separately re-issued by Mr. David Archer's Parton Press, which did so much for young poets, including Mr. Barker, in the 'thirties. The "True Confession" confirms one's feeling that Mr. Barker is not merely one of the most original talents of a period but one of the very few whose collected poems offer not only past performance but promise for the future.

J. S.

AT THE BALLET



Ximenez-Vargas Spanish Ballet
(SADLER'S WELLS)

WITH three of London's largest houses—Covent Garden, the Palace and the Festival Hall—catering lavishly for ballet-goers it was an act of daring to bring in a young company of Spanish dancers to make its first appearance in England. Moreover, it opened at Sadler's Wells at the moment when the Edinburgh had planted itself well in the news.

The venture was uncommonly well justified, for it is long since London has had the chance to enjoy a night of Spanish dancing so fresh and gay and unpretentious; so bubbling with the spirit of youth and good humour. These qualities, for all their charm, would not of themselves be enough to sustain a long programme, however varied, but the company of twelve dancers, two Flamenco singers and a guitarist is composed of artists of strongly individual talents who can hold the stage superbly in isolation or in pairs and then merge with perfect subordination into the *ensembles* which are most engaging evidence of the company's total artistry.

In stage presentation the company is fortunate in having an artistic director, Maria del Carmen Carreras, whose imaginative skill wins captivating results from simple grouping and unusually good lighting.

Of course there are outstanding performers. Among the young women, all of whom hold the eye in pleasure, Victoria Salcedo has the greatest opportunities for a display of versatility and humour, while Ana Mercedes, in more dramatic moods and in magical use of castanets, is in the same bracket of polished accomplishment. A female

Flamenco singer is a novelty, and Fina Vivo, tall and elegant, is seductively equipped both as singer and dancer.

The leading men, Roberto Ximenez and Manola Vargas, keep modestly in the picture until they step out to exhibit a splendid mastery of the intricacies of the Spanish dance idiom. Mr. Ximenez' *zapateado* ranks with the most dazzling seen in this country. Emilio Bonet, the guitarist, is a capital asset and so also is Flamenco-singer Manola Leiva.

A perfectionist is clearly responsible for the good style, design and colour of the dresses and ought to be named in the programme. It is an oddity, by the way, of the programme that all the performers, male and female alike, have their names in very small print with single initials only to denote quite glamorous Christian names.

C. B. MORTLOCK

AT THE FESTIVAL



The Hidden King
(ASSEMBLY HALL)
Nekrasov

(ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE)

PRINCES Street has sprouted a night-crop of luminous onions, a trifle oriental in flavour and dressed in a line straight enough to delight the eye even of a Scottish gardener. The streetcars named Morningside and Portobello have crept away, mourned at least by me, to the great tramhalla. And "on the fringe," where they should be at home, late-night nudes gambol for the first time, presumably with the blessing of

the Watch Committee. Otherwise so far the eleventh Festival looks very much like the tenth.

This week theatrical excitement was pinned mainly to Jonathan Griffin's *The Hidden King*, a poet's play which in its published form was claimed by defeatists to run for nine hours. It boasts nearly sixty characters (including a 1st, 2nd and 3rd Grizzled Workman), threshes Portugal's politics in the sixteenth century, and its production, by Christopher West in the Assembly Hall, was said to be the most expensive yet undertaken by the Festival. Speculation was natural. Human anatomy has known limits of endurance; could any play survive such drastic surgery as was obviously needed?

The Hidden King certainly survives. It could have stood up profitably to the amputation of a further thirty minutes, for it runs only just under four hours with intervals, which on every count is too long; but it is both an ambitious and unpretentious play, and to my mind the kind of work which a Festival should encourage. Already I have seen it called obscure. This is the common fate of plays by poets. Mr. Griffin could hardly have been more straightforward, apart from a flashback in the last act for which we were not prepared and which serves no great purpose. He has done his best to steer us through the difficulty that Portuguese, Spanish and Italian names have an awkward way of sounding the same. Printed as verse, his language takes the stage as rich expressive prose that breaks into rhyme when it feels like



(*The Hidden King*)

Dom Sebastian: King of Portugal—ROBERT EDDISON

Dom Diogo de Brito—ROBERT SPEAGHT

it. Not always successfully. He is fond of shock-therapy alliteration—"Amazonian forests rotting rigid"—that suggests a trick, and sometimes he admits near-bathos, as in "Listen: you must not rest till the Pretender's dangled to his rest." But in the main the force and shape of his phrases are fine, and he can sustain them in a long speech.

While *The Hidden King* isn't a religious play, but a play about the mind and spirit, it touches the centres of human belief, and its dilemmas are still with us. Its theme is perfectly clear, the gradual sublimation through disaster and hardship of a man who begins as an arrogant playboy and ends humbly in martyrdom. He is Sebastian, the young king of Portugal, taken captive in a futile battle, lost for twenty years, and now emerging, having found his true self in simplicity, as the pretender to his own throne. Is he the king, or not? In any case he is a pawn heavy enough to jam the delicate balance of Mediterranean power politics.

Mr. Griffin's embroidery of intrigue is thicker than it need be. The pattern becomes a little repetitive, for we know that all the ducal dice are loaded. Sebastian's love for a Spanish aristocrat crops up too late in the play to deserve so big a part in its end. But easy as it is to pick faults, one can point with pleasure to a sense of dramatic effect uncommon in a poet, to a subtle understanding of character, and to a good mind expressing itself unflatulently in terms of the theatre.

It is anything but a static play, and Mr. West's production, one of the most able yet seen at Edinburgh, uses the

platform stage for telling movement and for groupings that are often spectacularly exciting. He has been fortunate in his players. Robert Eddison, an absurdly neglected actor, takes Sebastian all the way through the moral refinery with a perception that makes a difficult part seem simple. He speaks beautifully, and so, of course, does Robert Speaight, whose loyal nobleman (Sebastian's Kent) is a vital figure whose burning faith flames into memorable eloquence. These two stand out, but are stoutly backed, by Ernest Thesiger's icy Pope (in his little red cap giving more than a fleeting suggestion of Beatrice Lillie), Pauline Jameson's Spanish Lady and Sebastian Shaw's insolent bully, a comic character deployed with the maximum effect by the producer. Leslie Hurry's dressing makes a brave show on the big open stage (grumble: Sebastian, penniless, comes spick and span from his hovel), and his shallow staircase with gothic Italian trimmings fits the production without fuss. The large white spinnaker flying at the beginning I found distracting, but Skipper West soon has it down.

Nekrassov, the Sartre farce shouted down by Paris for its attack on French politics, is the English Stage Company's contribution, and disappointing. I thought it funnier at Unity Theatre last year, where it went with a swing that helped to cover a rather mechanical formula. Some of its political jokes are shrewd, but on second viewing there is a tedious amount of facetious charaderay. Much depends on the playing of the

leading character, a swindler of genius who has sold himself to a sensational right-wing paper as a notorious Soviet refugee. The name of the actor who took it at Unity is unfortunately four hundred miles away, but I seem to remember I believed in him. In Robert Helpmann I did not. His performance is mannered and in the wrong sense theatrical. The brute drive behind the polish of the really big crook is missing; this miscasting is serious, because the whole play hangs on his capacity to impress.

The level of acting is undistinguished. Martin Miller, Jane Downs, and Roddy MacMillan rise above it, but the only member of the cast of whom one can write with enthusiasm is George Benson, who doesn't put an eyelash wrong in his sketch of a hopelessly honest little man toying with dishonesty in sheer desperation.

The shakiness of the production is amply summed up on the curtain-map of Paris, which cannot make up its mind about either accents or spelling, and even manages to shift Notre Dame, all of it, to the wrong island.

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PLAY

Share My Lettuce
(LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

THIS "diversion with music" began life as a Cambridge undergraduate production, which may account for an occasional whiff of intellectual pretentiousness. If it had leaned less on its memories of *Cranks* it would have been even more diverting than it is. One recalls in that ingenious charade the brilliance of the production and the poverty of the writing. Eleanor Fazan, who produces *Share My Lettuce*, is less of a Cranko than she perhaps believes; but on the other hand Bamber Gascoigne, the author, possesses unusual wit and facility in light verse, and when this is given its head—for example in the *Party Games* piece—it lifts the show almost into the Farjeon class.

The music is ingenious rather than catchy: one song, the contrapuntal "Wallflower Waltz," very ingenious indeed. The set, an austere design of isosceles triangles by Disley Jones, is economical but adequate. The cast, distinguished from one another by the colour of their clothes, is organized on those democratic lines that characterize "little revue," but nothing can keep Kenneth Williams and Maggie Smith from soaring ahead of the rest. Miss Smith is a new discovery, twenty-two years old, who should come on fast. Mr. Williams played the lead in Sandy Wilson's much under-praised *The Buccaneer* at this same theatre a year or so ago, and ought by now to be recognized as the funniest young comedian on the British stage. Perhaps it is because he cannot help looking like



Sibilot—GEORGE BENSON

Georges de Valéra—ROBERT HELPMANN

a rather too knowing fourth-form schoolboy that the public has not yet seen in him the makings of a new Henry Kendall, dare I say even of a new Leslie Henson?

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The long-players still sweep the board—*Waltz of the Toreadors* (Criterion—14/3/56), *At the Drop of a Hat* (Fortune—16/1/57), *The Chalk Garden* (Haymarket—25/4/56), each indispensable in its own way. Of the later arrivals, one should see the Australian *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (New—8/8/57), something new in the London theatre, and *A Dead Secret* (Piccadilly—5/6/57), in which Paul Scofield gives a bravura performance.

B. A. YOUNG

AT THE PICTURES

The Story of Esther Costello
—*Operation Mad Ball*

THE THERE is a radical difference in the texture of the two threads in *The Story of Esther Costello* (Director: David Miller). Beside the essential, basic story of the deaf and blind girl and the devoted, constant perseverance that helped her back to something like normal life, the subsidiary story of the marital troubles of her benefactress and the violent climax must appear artificial, forced, sensationalized; moreover, they are not without clichés in the telling. (I know it must be difficult to find fresh symbols, but I had hardly expected to see again that shot of the French windows burst in by wind and storm, to indicate that an act of sexual passion is taking place off-screen.) The strength of the piece is all in that first thread: in the sheer interest of watching how the girl who has lost the two most acute and important senses is taught to overcome her fearful disability, and in the delicate and beautifully-judged playing of the part by Heather Sears.

The details of the technique for establishing communication, of the devices and the methods used, have the same sort of interest as in a documentary, purely factual film; but the extra emphasis given by our emotional concern for the characters, above all for the central character, makes them astonishingly gripping and moving to watch as in a documentary they could (and, for that matter, should) never be. The mentor starts from scratch: when Mrs. Landi (Joan Crawford) finds her, the girl has been existing almost like an animal, and before even the first step (tracing letters and words on the palm of her hand while the other hand touches the object referred to)—before even this, her incomprehension and fear of any kind of fresh experience have to be overcome. Then each tiny new success, after sometimes weeks of laborious concentration on the next step, is a minor climax in the story. There is one significant and attractive moment when the girl, after



Margaret Landi—JOAN CRAWFORD

Esther Costello—HEATHER SEARS

being told to pick up one of the little group of objects on the table, picks the wrong one—and after the teacher's anxious, disappointed repetition of the request, shows by a smile that she disobeyed deliberately, as a piece of mischief. This is a climax in itself—the first hint that she is regaining normal spirits.

Once the first, tremendous barrier is broken, each stage in the progress is a little easier, until Esther has overcome her handicap so far as to be ready for exploitation in a huge charity campaign run by Mrs. Landi's husband (Rossano Brazzi). The main climax is that this flashy and unscrupulous charmer rapes her, and the shock restores her perceptions (it has been established that her affliction was psychological and there was no organic damage). This, as I say, seems forced and sensational; but the subsequent scene of her return to sight and hearing, and her first hesitating words, have an extraordinary power, and Miss Sears's touching and sensitive performance is something to see.

Operation Mad Ball (Director: Richard Quine) is an example of superb, precision-tooled competence in the arousing of laughter. It is immensely funny; I'm sure anybody capable of being amused by films at all will be almost helpless with laughter by the end of it (it was interesting to notice how what I took to be a sticky, suspicious, just-try-to-amuse-me audience was gradually softened up in the first twenty minutes, abandoning its sturdy efforts to remain impassive). But although it has several good comedians, including Jack Lemmon and a newcomer, Ernie Kovacs, and provides

Mickey Rooney with a spot for a furious outburst of comic energy, the point is that most of its laughs—and they are real belly-laughs—are scientifically constructed, worked up and timed by the writer (it is from a play by Arthur Carter, who collaborated on the script) and the director. The scene is a U.S. Army hospital in France just after the war; the spring of the action is that the men, led by an insubordinate organizing genius named Hogan (Mr. Lemmon), are determined to arrange a great Mad Ball without the knowledge of the pompous and generally detested Adjutant (Mr. Kovacs). The speed, the dash, the invention and above all the skilled contrivance and timing of the comic incident make this about the funniest thing I have seen for years.

* * * * *

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

There is an attractive new French one in colour, *Mitsou*, from Colette's novel, set in Paris during the 1914 war and full of period charm. Most distinguished serious film in London is also French: *A Man Escaped* (10/7/57). You shouldn't miss Ben Gazzara's striking performance in *End as a Man* (7/8/57). The delightful dollop of pure entertainment *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) continues—and so, after all, does *The Prince and the Showgirl* (10/7/57).

After an unusually long time the Van Gogh story, *Lust for Life* (20/3/57), is released: uneven as a film, but visually magnificent. Another new release is *Hell Drivers* (see "Survey," 7/8/57), and another worth seeing is *The Abominable Snowman* (review next week).

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

Elba Revisited

THE "Eye to Eye" series of television programmes returned to the air (the B.B.C.'s "Network of the Nation") with a glorious half-hour of wit, laughter, excitement and handsome photography. "Elba Boomerang" is a film about the island of Elba, more particularly about the customers of Signor Sardi's barber's shop in the village of Marciana Marina. The trick of converting a scrapbook into a homogeneous pattern by herding the story-tellers momentarily into a bus, a train, a coal-mine, a barber's shop or an inn is as old as Chaucer—and still seems very effective.

Here the six tales were introduced by the barber and his customers and told in delightful episodic flashbacks. According to *Radio Times* the yarns were heard for the first time by B.B.C. snoopers masquerading as the demon barber's clients—"In order to get to know Elba from the inside we decided that the best thing was to take a waiting pew and listen. A fortnight later the stories of six customers from all over the island were being told within Sardi's marble walls"—but I find this rather difficult to believe. The good people of Elba, I am told, talk more easily and eloquently over a glass of vino than they do before strangers in a barber's shop.

But I am quibbling. The result of all this eavesdropping and line-shooting is a memorable burst of Latin *joie de vivre* and a spectacularly beautiful little film. Every one of the stories was told with gusto and sparkling pictures. I enjoyed the Ascension Day procession ("The service was short because the priest had



AIDAN CRAWLEY

[Escape]

the decorators in"), the football match between Capolivera and Porto Azzurro (with the ball plopping into the sea whenever the referee displeased either team) and the story of poor Signor Scrocci whose donkey stopped before every wine-shop on his route long after his master had signed the pledge.

But for sheer excitement the little screen can never have flickered so effectively as in the *mattanza* interlude. This was a long haul at the tunny nets by a team of muscular and obviously exhilarated fishermen. As they hauled, the tunny—scores of prize specimens—thrashed their shrinking *lebensraum* into a maelstrom. Then one by one the bolder fishermen slipped into the water and noosed their catch. It was so thrilling that one could thank the poor tunny for their part in the spectacle only in retrospect.

"Elba Boomerang" was written and produced by Stephen Hearst, edited by

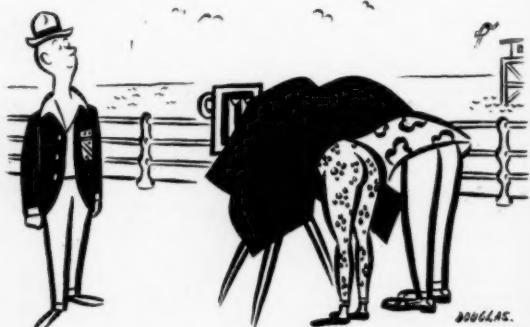
Sheila S. Tomlinson and photographed by Douglas Wolfe, and I have no criticism to make of their work except to remind them that the acoustics of the barber's shop—baffle straw and rags notwithstanding—were not good enough for a film of this quality.

So many tales of escape, true and fictional, have been written, filmed and televised during the last year or two that the market has turned sour. The I.T.A. last year screened an interminable series of Stalag stories—none of them really convincing—and I had hoped that this vein of drama had at last been worked out. But no. The B.B.C. is now dishing out another batch of escapades, and though they are competently written and produced by Arthur Swinson and introduced by Aidan Crawley, they seldom rise above the standard of second-rate repertory drama.

It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for this failure. Prisoners may have overacted in real life just as they do here on the screen, and the Germans may in real life have seemed just as wooden and stupid as they do in these fragmentary tales of scuffle and tension. I don't know. But the viewer is left with the feeling that "Escape" is nearer to charade than faithful reconstruction. Very disappointing.

Another dismal series is Associated-Rediffusion's "Shadow Squad" outing called "The Rent Racket." "No crime is worse," says *TV Times*, "than that which battens on the misery of other people." No television is worse, say I, than that which buries a serious social problem under a mound of mediocre theatricality.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



DOUGLAS.

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